

Claims

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A computer-implemented method of providing help information for a software
2 application comprising:
3 selecting help information for presentation to a user based on a user help knowledge base
4 including help information previously selected by a user;
5 determining a presentation mode of the selected help information based on a presentation
6 mode of help information previously selected by the user;
7 and
8 presenting the selected help information according to the determined presentation mode.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising tracking the help information previously
2 selected by the user in a user help profile of the user help knowledge base.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein the user help knowledge base comprises a user
2 application profile.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising prioritizing the selected help information for
2 presentation based on the user help knowledge base.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the user help knowledge base further comprises selecting
2 help information for presentation from third-party service providers based on the user help
3 knowledge base.
- 4 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the presentation mode of the help information comprises
5 a presentation mode.

1 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the presentation mode comprises at least one selected
2 from the group consisting of a visual mode, a display mode or an audio mode.

1 8. The method of claim 7 wherein the display presentation mode comprises a graphical
2 form.

1 9. The method of claim 1 further comprising maintaining the user help knowledge base.

1 10. The method of claim 9 wherein maintaining the user help knowledge base further
2 comprises:

3 responsive to a user selection of a help information file, creating a data entry for the
4 selection, the data entry including the following data: the application context in which the help
5 file is selected, an identifier of the help file selected, a presentation mode in which the help file
6 was presented, at least one help topic associated with the help file, and a help content format of
7 the file.

1 11. A computer-implemented system of providing help information for a software application
2 comprising:

3 selecting help information for presentation to a user based on a user help knowledge base
4 and a current application context; and
5 determining a presentation mode of the help information based on the user help
6 knowledge base.

1 12. The system of claim 11 wherein the user help knowledge base comprises a user help
2 profile indicating help information previously selected by the user.

1 13. The system of claim 12 wherein the user help knowledge base comprises a user
2 application profile.

+28

1 14. The system of claim 11 further comprising prioritizing the selected help information for
2 presentation based on the user help knowledge base.

1 15. The system of claim 11 wherein the user help knowledge base further comprises selecting
2 help information for presentation from third party service providers based on the user help
3 knowledge base.

4 16. The system of claim 11 wherein the presentation mode of the help information comprises
5 a presentation mode.

1 17. The system of claim 16 wherein the presentation mode is one of a visual mode, a display
2 mode or an audio mode.

1 18. The system of claim 17 wherein the display presentation mode is one of a pop-up
2 window box, a hypertext link or a search data entry box.

1 19. The system of claim 11 further comprising maintaining the user help knowledge base.

1 20. The system of claim 19 wherein maintaining the user help knowledge base further
2 comprises:

3 responsive to a user selection of a help information file, creating a data entry for the
4 selection, the data entry including the following data: the application context in which the help
5 file is selected, an identifier of the help file selected, a presentation mode in which the help file
6 was selected, at least one help topic associated with the help file, and a help content format of the
7 file.

1 21. A system of providing help information for a software application comprising:

2 a processor for executing software;

3 a memory accessible to the processor storing a user help knowledge base, a software
4 application context, and a database of help files;

+ 21

5 an input device communicatively coupled to the processor to receive user input; and
6 an output device communicatively coupled to the processor for presenting data;
7 wherein the software comprises:

8 a help module for selecting help information for presentation to a user based on
9 the user knowledge base;

10 an application module communicatively coupled to the help module wherein the
11 application module and help module exchange user data; and

12 a user interface module communicatively coupled to the help module for
13 receiving user input from the user input device, sending user input data to the help
14 module and for formatting help information from the help module in a mode of
15 presentation for presenting by the output device.

1 22. The system of claim 21 wherein the user help knowledge base comprises a user help
2 profile indicating help information previously selected by the user.

1 23. The system of claim 22 wherein the user help profile at least one data entry for a user
2 selection of a help information file, the data entry including the following data: the application
3 context in which the help file is selected, an identifier of the help file selected, a presentation
4 mode in which the help file was selected, at least one help topic associated with the help file, and
5 a help content format of the file.

1 24. The system of claim 22 wherein the user help knowledge base comprises a user
2 application profile.

1 25. The system of claim 21 wherein the processor further comprises a network interface and
2 the help module further comprises a communication interface to a server for a third party service

3 provider wherein the help module requests information from the third party server and receives
4 the information through the communication interface.

1 26. A computer-implemented method of providing help information for a software
2 application comprising:

3 selecting help information for presentation to a user based on help information previously
4 selected by a user;

5 determining a presentation mode of the selected help information based on a presentation
6 mode of help information previously selected by the user;

7 and

8 presenting the selected help information according to the determined presentation mode.

1 27. The method of claim 26 further comprising tracking the help information previously
2 selected by the user in a user help profile.

1